Dowry system

2014. MS. PRAMILA BOHIDAR: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that demand of dowry either at the time of marriage or thereafter, is an insult to Indian womenhood; and

(b) if so, the steps Government propose to take to preserve the honour, dignity and prestige of Indian women, so that they are not harassed in the name of dowry?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI KANTI SINGH):

(a) Yes, Sir. Demanding dowry, either directly or indirectly from the parents or other relatives or guardian of a bride is an offence under the Dowry Prohibition Act, 1960.

(b) Since the menace of dowry is a reflection of women's low status in society Government has taken a number of steps to raise the status of women and to change the societal attitudes towards girls and women. These include media campaigns, awareness generation camps, spreading legal literacy, counselling, legal aid, support to voluntary agencies and schemes for socio-economic empowerment of women.

The Government has taken steps in the following areas to ensure protection of women from harassment for dowry:

> Advising the State Government from time to time to take measures for the following:

- appointment of Dowry Prohibition Officers and their effective functioning and notification of Rules under the Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961
- vigorously enforce that existing legislation relating to dowry violence.
- sensitise of police officials charged with the responsibility of protecting the women
- set up women police cells in police stations and exclusive women police stations.

- provide insitutional support to the victims of violence
- ensure wider recruitment of women police officers and
- train police personnel in special laws dealing with atrocities against women
- setting up of Fast Track Courts
- setting up of Family Courts

> redressal of grievances through interventions of National and State Commissions for Women.

> sensitization of judiciary and police and civil administration on gender issues.

> follows up of efforts of cases of atrocities against women received from various sources, including NCW, with concerned authorities in the Central and the State Government.

> setting up of helplines for women in distress.

> implementation of schemes for (i) awareness generation and advocacy and (ii) economic empowerment of women through the programmes of Rashtriya Mahila Kosh, Swashakti Project, Swayamisidha Project, Swawlamban Programme and Support to Training and Employment Programme (STEP)

> organizing Legal Literacy and Legal Awareness Camps.

Literacy rate

2015. SHRI GIREESH KUMAR SANGHI: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) the literacy rate in the country;

(b) the lowest and highest literacy State of the country according to the latest report; and

(c) the efforts made by his Ministry to improve the literacy of the masses?